

Carol DeSoto

From: Alex Winter <alexbillwinter@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2021 4:51 PM
To: Carol DeSoto
Subject: Comments for record of Sept. 22 hearing re: Amendment to 2016 Comp Plan-Airport.
Attachments: airport - biological hotspot with outline DNR (1) (1) (1).JPG; airport - stream valleys - from 2015 Economic Study clip (1) (1) (1) (1).JPG; airport - slopes - for Industrial Park District (1) (1) (1) (1).JPG; Airport - IBA - proposed rezoning (1) (1).png; Mattawoman DNR Economic Engine slide (2).JPG; airport - ecological assets maps (1).pdf; National Marine Sanctuary and Mallows- Potomac Brochure by Mattawoman Watershed Society (3) (3) (1) (1).pdf; Maryland Airport Land Use Study draft 4-15-15, PC Work Session of 9-14-15 (1) (4).pdf

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The health of Mattawoman Creek and its fish nursery is a key Bay resource that needs additional and immediate protection. The Mattawoman fishery is key for yellow perch and bass fishing. *See attachments: DNR Economic & Biological Hot Spot*

The 2014 Inner-agency Taskforce Report identified Mattawoman Creek as "on the tipping point for irreparable loss." That report led to more protection for Mattawoman, the Watershed Conservation District (WCD) that was created in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

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The Case for the Protection of the Resources of Mattawoman Watershed Study - Prepared by: The Interagency Mattawoman Ecosystem Management Task Force:

https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Documents/Mattawoman_Ecosystem_Final_Report_March_2012.pdf

PowerPoint on the

report: https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Documents/tredmanAlliance_Presentation.pdf
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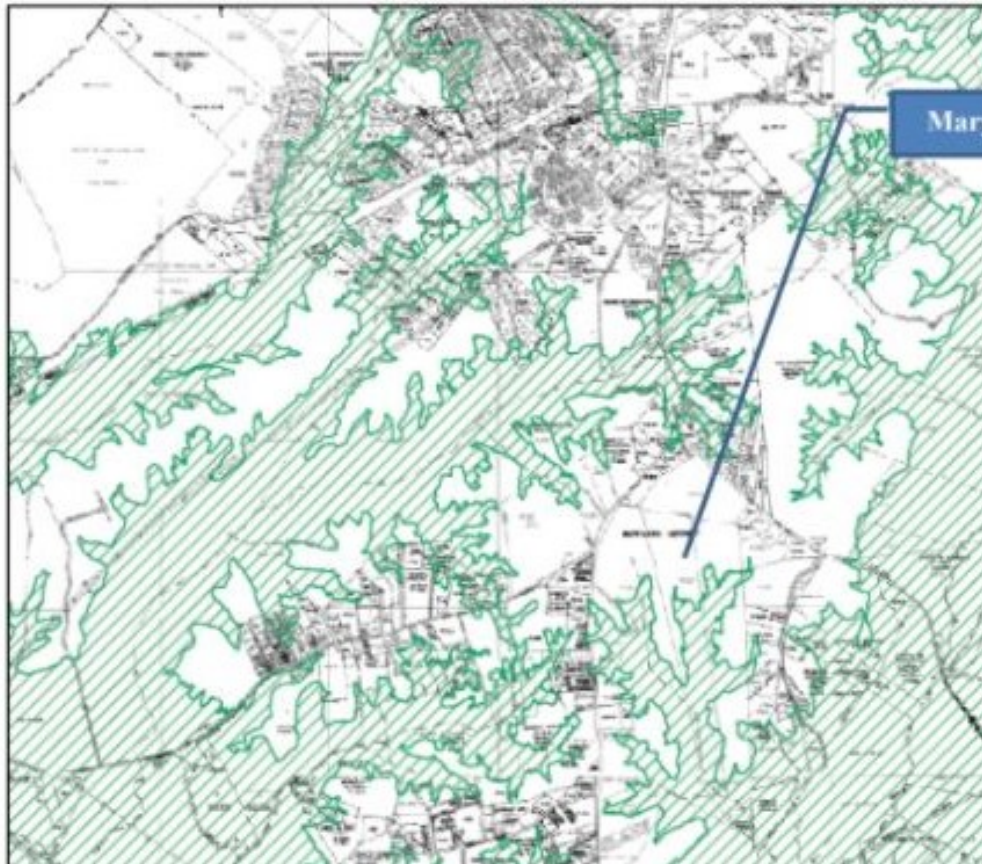
Of course, we were happy to hear you mention the importance of the Mattawoman and Nanjemoy Watersheds when you spoke.

I'm sure you mentioned them because you know both watersheds and their habitats are critically important to the future success of the National Marine Sanctuary, as well as their independent high value. I wish more people recognized the ecological relationship between these resources, and the important role both Mattawoman and Nanjemoy play in the ecological support for Mallows Bay and the waters of the

Potomac. We understood the advantages for the region and the NMS, during the certification process. We were bitterly disappointed that, even though the most expansive option received the most positive comments, the most limited option was chosen. **See the attached NMS brochure.**

On September 22, there will be a hearing before the Charles County Commissioners on an amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan which would remove the WCD zoning around Maryland Airport, allowing the zoning to convert to Industrial. Maryland Airport is now an FAA "reliever" airport with mostly small aircraft using leaded fuel. The zoning would result in a major expansion of the airport, greatly increasing the number of flights, and adding access for Corporate Jets. This change would dramatically transform this airport which is located mostly in a Mattawoman Stream valley surrounded by Audubon Important Bird Area. *see map below and attachment IBA.*

Map 8 *Mattawoman Creek Stream Valley in Vicinity of Study Area*



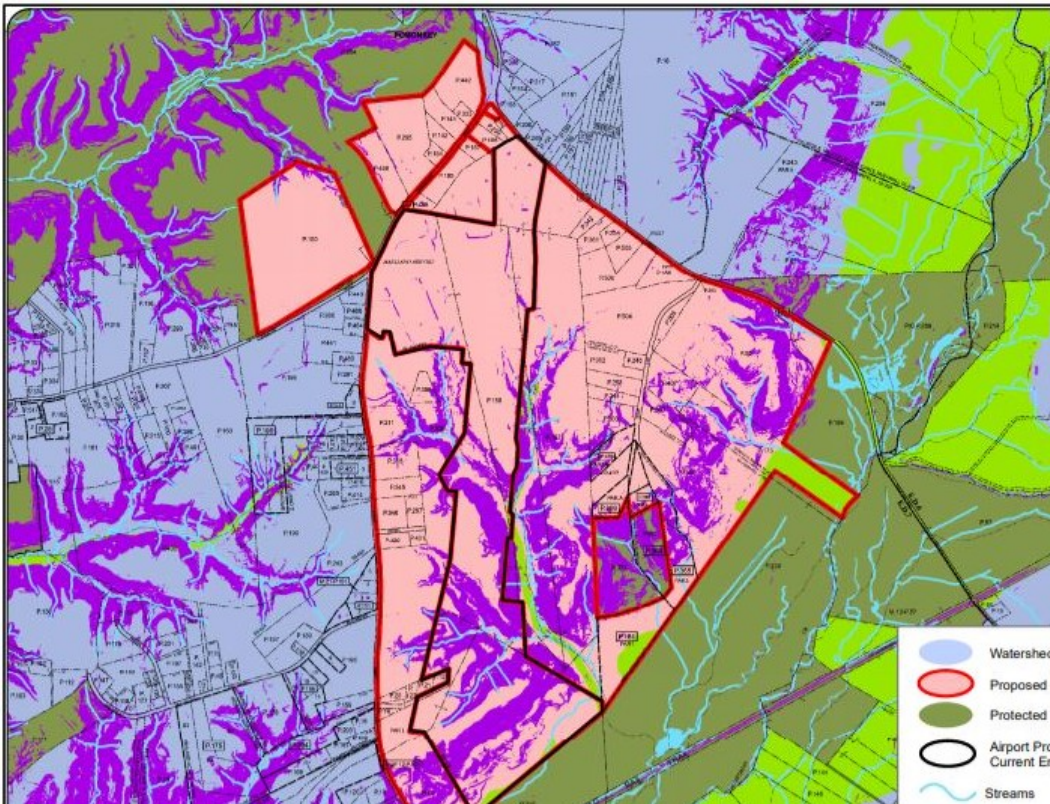
The removal of the WCD around the airport is an immediate critical threat to the Mattawoman right now. Our organization, Mattawoman Watershed Society (MWS) is working to get the word out and we really need some stronger help. If the Chesapeake Conservancy can directly get involved-wonderful! If not, can you help in some other way?

WCD Background:

In 2016, the then- board of commissioners was positive and friendly to the environment, the citizens, and the future. They were able to pass a comprehensive plan with the Watershed Conservation District and a greatly reduced Development District, to help protect Mattawoman Creek - since the 1990 Comprehensive Plan, almost all of the watershed had been part of a sprawling mostly forested Development District big enough to accommodate a major city, in which the buffers were smaller than elsewhere, and with other incentives for developing there.

The WCD is an innovative zoning feature that is protecting the Mattawoman by only allowing only one unit per 20 acres - in the forested areas. In response, land speculators and developers organized effectively and succeeded in getting elected a board of which 4 members (out of 5) are staunch supporters of the development industry and hostile to any meaningful protection for the community, forests, air, or water quality. Their actions are reflexively hostile to the climate & the future, but not their rhetoric.

The same people who were successful in getting the new enviro-hostile commissioners elected have worked to demonize the WCD, and its supporters. Covid has dramatically reduced public participation. Even hearings on school districting issues, which have always brought great crowds to hearings, brought very few people out to the virtual hearings. In these conditions, the commissioners, in our view, seem to be working hard to please the developers who are their real constituency. They have been eating away at the WCD bit by bit, but this attack, with its direct and secondary impacts, impervious surfaces, weakening of the WCD, and its increase of demand on the general resources, is aiming at the heart of the WCD, and also at the integrity of the Mattawoman Watershed living resources.



In 2014 the County attempted to rezone the same area to industrial, and their own consultant effectively said that the economic benefit that it would supposedly bring the County was dubious and that the environmental constraints were too great. **see attachment: MD Airport Land Use Study.** The county has since shopped around and found a more compliant consultant.

I've also included the list of ecological attributes in the area that is proposed for the removal of the WCD and for the industrial rezoning. Scroll through the maps that show its high value of healthy habitat and RTE forest and fishery support. **See attachment: Airport - Ecological Assets & Maps.**

I will close with the human element: The removal of the WCD is not good for the local community. The airport runway points right at two schools, an elementary school, and a middle school, that are only 2100 feet away. The schools are located in a historic, primarily African American community and the piston engine planes, which are now the largest distributors of lead in the United States, aim right at the schools at takeoff and landings. The indigenous presence is still evident today. This historic, cultural landscape is important, as you know, to the communities that are at the center in **The Indigenous Cultural Landscapes Study for the Nanjemoy and Mattawoman Creek Watersheds.**

Study:

<https://chesapeakeconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NanjemoyMattawoman-ICL-FINAL.pdf>

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